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ABSTRACT

Counselors have often indicated an apathetic attitude towards involvement in career education activities. Suggested ways in which career guidance can become a useful tool for providing students with the information, skills, and assistance to make career plans are presented for the elementary, middle, and high school levels. At the elementary level, counselors can assist students in career education in the following areas: (1) promote an awareness of self, (2) provide for a realistic awareness of the world of work, (3) assist in the development of decision-making skills, and (4) facilitate the introduction of positive values and attitudes towards work. At the middle school level, students should be ready to explore some occupational consideration in a realistic manner. The counselor and teacher could facilitate this through activities in: (1) career cluster exploration, (2) assessment of interests, aptitudes, and abilities as related to occupational roles, and (3) orientation of students to high school curricula and training programs. The guidance counselor at the high school level should be able to assist students in planning for their educational, vocational, and social needs by offering career guidance services in the areas of vocational counseling, consultation, placement, and followup. A bibliography is included. (Author/EC)

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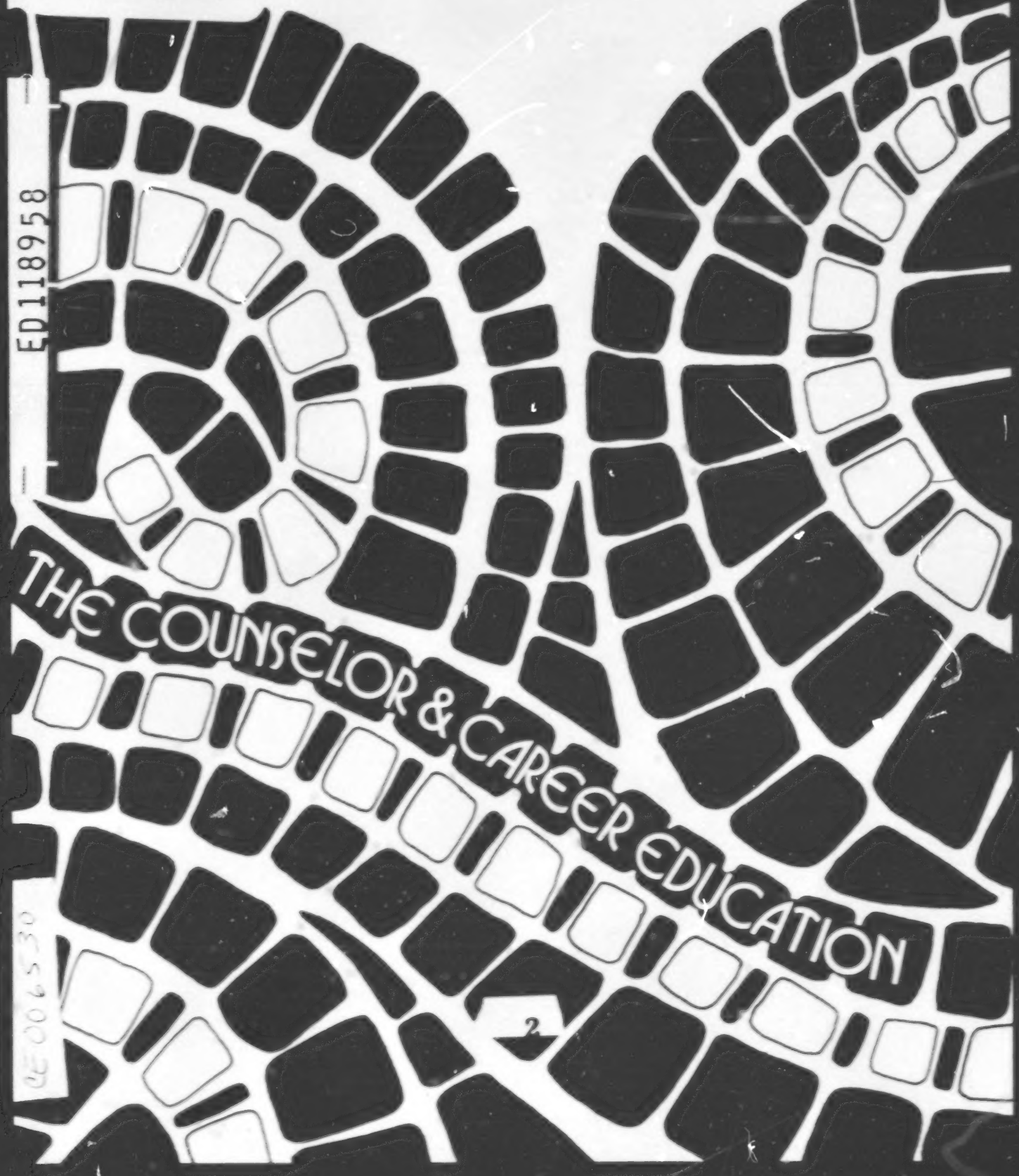

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THE COUNSELOR AND CAREER EDUCATION

BY

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THE COUNSELOR AND CAREER EDUCATION

Counselors are standing on the brink of a tremendous opportunity that can help prove their accountability in education. Career Education provides counselors a vehicle to show their services can make a difference. Why, then, are many professionals avoiding or indicating apathy towards involvement in the Career Education movement?

Career Education is and destines to be a means for making classroom learning and guidance services more meaningful for students. Traditional educational and guidance programs often limit the definition of career to mean only educational and vocational decisions. A more liberal definition of career encompasses all areas of human development. When viewing the term in this light, career includes a variety of possible patterns of personal choice as related to each individual's total life-style.

Counselors are present in today's schools for the stated purpose of meeting the needs of youth. Yet rarely can counselors document the needs they are addressing. The dictionary defines "need" as being a situation or condition that is necessary or desired. This is not a "final all" to be remedied, but at least indicates what direction the student desires to travel.

A recent study on the role of the counselor, as described by superintendents, principals, and counselors (DiSilvestro, 1972) indicates that the counselor should be directly involved in student career

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DiSilvestro, Frank, The Role of the Secondary School Counselor in Indiana as Described By Superintendents, Secondary School Principals, and Secondary School Counselors, Indianapolis: Indiana Department of Public Instruction, 1973.

development. Emphasis was placed on vocational assessment, use of community resources, occupation awareness classes, parent workshops, and field trips to business and industry.

The following will attempt to deal with ways in which counselors may assist students in meeting their needs through a Career Education Program.

GUIDANCE AND CAREER EDUCATION AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

The guidance component of the Career Education program in the elementary (K-5) school is fourfold: a) to promote an awareness of self, b) to provide for a realistic awareness of the world of work, c) to assist in the development of decision-making skills and d) to facilitate the introduction of positive values and attitudes towards work.

The self is always in a process of "becoming" (Allport, 1955); therefore, the self is never a finished product. Career guidance can facilitate this process of "becoming" by assisting the student in accepting what he is and where he is by providing opportunities for maximal development. The counselor, by working with students and/or teachers of students, can promote this awareness of self by initiating guidance and/or classroom activities to help the individual identify and develop varied interests and provide opportunities in which these interests may be explored.

Allport, G. W., Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality, Yale, 1955.

Early childhood educational experiences provide an excellent opportunity for pupils to develop an awareness of the world of work. The counselor can assist in expanding this awareness by coordinating a developmental program of career information and resource people. This service can do much to encourage the teacher to incorporate meaningful career-oriented experiences into the regular classroom activities. To be meaningful, these activities must be integrated into the existing curriculum applying the basic skills used in mathematics, language arts and social science. Besides adding important information and providing enrichment to the present curriculum, it will also help demonstrate to students the similarity between school life and work life.

Each individual has the right to choose and produce, however, every choice and all products will not be perfect. Anderson (1969) stresses, "What is important is the process of choosing and the process of producing. Through action comes a confidence...." Learning to make realistic decisions and choices are skills basic to living and interacting. Counselor and counselee coming together in a one-to-one relationship is only one way to facilitate effective decision-making skills. Meaningful decision-making strategies must be taught when the students are in quest of these skills. Group counseling and classroom activities dealing with problems of daily living provide excellent opportunities for counselors to work with these

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Anderson. Harold H. Creativity and Its Cultivation. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

strategies. The counselors could also be a welcomed support-person for the teacher when the concept of decision-making is introduced in the classroom.

Daily we are forced to make choices about how we live our lives. Realistically these choices will reflect our own set of personal values and attitudes. Counselors should be helping students identify these values and develop wholesome attitudes that will contribute to their becoming well-adjusted productive members of society. By assisting students in exploring the world of work, counselors can emphasize how positive values and attitudes developed in school can lead to success in future work experiences. Counselors can also encourage teachers to foster an appreciation for workers in the family, at school, in the neighborhood, and in the community as their course content relates to this topic. Field trips, focusing on people rather than product, and parents demonstrating their work role, tools used, and work clothes worn, are activities which can culminate in related units of study.

Career guidance at the elementary level can help students identify and solve many problems before they become serious. We can no longer wait until a student is in high school before helping him face the questions: Who am I? What do I like? What can I do? How will I earn a living? How can I become a self-sustaining productive citizen experiencing a meaningful life?

GUIDANCE AND CAREER EDUCATION AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

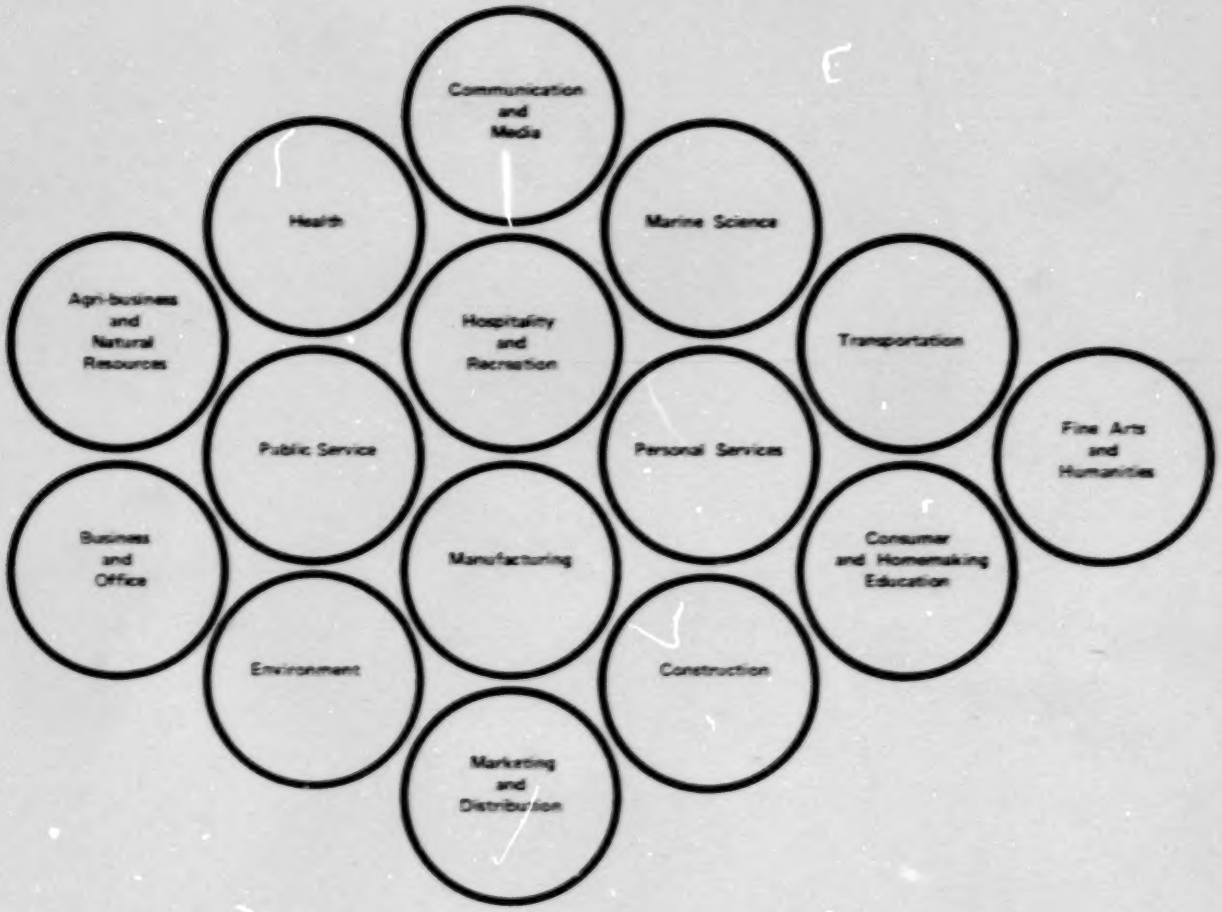
Assuming that a basic knowledge of oneself and an awareness of the world of work has been introduced at the elementary level, middle school students should be ready to explore, at a realistic level, some occupational considerations. The counselor and teacher, working in a cooperative effort, can facilitate this exploration. In grades 6-8 career guidance activities might include: a) career cluster exploration, b) assessment of interests, aptitudes and abilities as related to occupational roles and c) orientation of students to high school curricula and training programs.

Career cluster exploration by students at the middle school level can result in the elimination of many educational and/or occupational frustrations in subsequent years. Counselors can play an essential role in assisting young people, at this level, in becoming familiar with specific characteristics of the family of jobs classified in occupational clusters. Recently the U. S. Office of Education has identified fifteen clusters in which all jobs may be grouped (Figure 1).

Other classification systems have been organized by Roe, Holland, D.O.T., etc. By exploring two or three job clusters in any system, students can begin to see the similar relationship between jobs and the different educational and/or training levels required. This information must be available to <u>all</u> students; therefore the counselor must use it not only in the counseling session, but introduce the classifications to teachers to be used in the classroom. Counselors can also help teachers develop job clusters around their

Figure 1:

U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION'S 15 OCCUPATIONAL CLUSTERS



particular subject matter (Figure 2). This will give the student an instant picture of how a particular subject can relate to a future occupation.

As students become more perceptive of the characteristics in each of the occupational clusters, the counselor must be prepared to guide them in analyzing their own interests, aptitudes and abilities. Students' interests, aptitudes, and abilities may be identified many different ways, using instruments designed to facilitate this assessment. However, the identification is only the first step. The second step, and the most important part, involves the teacher-counselor guidance team assisting the students in relating this self-information to his expanding knowledge of the world of work. Using this information in an individual and/or group setting, counselors can help students explore life-styles associated with a variety of ways one might choose to make a living.

A new assessment tool that can be self-administered, self-scored, and self-interpreted by the student is Holland's "Self-Directed Search" (1972). Its main purpose is to provide a vocational counseling experience, giving the results of the self-assessment experience as immediate feedback. The instrument follows the author's theory of

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Holland, J. L., Self-Directed Search, Palo Alto, California: Consulting Psychological Press, 1972.

Figure 2:

SOME OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO INTEREST AND ABILITY IN MATHEMATICS

J. Weston Walch, Publisher
Portland, Maine

vocational choice, organized in terms of his six personality types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. It is appropriate for students grades 7-12 and requires about 45 minutes to administer, score and interpret.

The Ohio Vocational Interest Survey (OVIS, 1969) is another appropriate tool used to assist students in inventorying their interests and relating these interests to the world of work. Using the Data--People--Things approach to occupational counseling, OVIS is ideally suited for a group or individual career orientation of the world of work. Vocational exploration is the prime intention of this instrument relating OVIS items to job activities rather than job titles. Limited copies may be obtained for school use from the Division of Vocational Education, Indiana Department of Public Instruction. However, scoring is done only by the test publisher.

A description of other instruments that might be used in helping students with occupational exploration and educational planning can be found in the appendix of the Indiana Career Education Curriculum Guide (Keiser and Wampler, 1972).

Probably one of the best services counselors provide to middle school students is that of orientation to the high school curricula and/or training programs. Strong emphasis at this level needs to be

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D'Costa, A. G., Winefordner, D. W., Odgers, J. G., and Koons, P. B., Jr., Ohio Vocational Interest Survey (OVIS), New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1969.

Keiser, J. C. and Wampler, E. C., Indiana Career Education Curriculum Guide, Indianapolis: Indiana Department of Public Instruction, 1972.

directed toward distinguishing between choice-making and decision-making. Tiedeman (1971) points out that choice-making occurs when alternatives are clearly available to the person and he must pick one, while decision-making involves not knowing what choices exist and having to invent them. He goes on to say that today's students want their independence, but under conditions of choice-making rather than decision-making. It is with the latter type of problem that counselors need to attend.

Since great emphasis is placed upon the right of the individual to choose his own life-style, educational and skill training decisions are extremely important. It is impossible to separate educational planning from the occupational planning and the two must be integrated in the planning process. Because middle school students make choices in accordance with their immediate needs and interests, and these choices are subject to change during the adolescent years, the best and most accurate information available must be provided in a continuous process. It should be flexible, individualized and informative as to both educational and occupational opportunities. This process must be planned and implemented by the counselor to lead students through a sequence of activities involving collection and organization of data, interpretation of data, and decisions related to the selection of appropriate academic and/or skill training courses. Group planning sessions along with individual time allowed for students with special problems can facilitate the career guidance process without the

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Tiedeman, D. V., "The Agony of Choice," in The Courage to Change, ed. by Roman Pucinski and Sharlene Hirsch, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

counselor having to see each student individually.

Parent involvement is a vital element in the planning process. One such plan invites the parents into the school during school hours for a group orientation to the high school curricula and training programs. At this time the counselor explains the planning process step by step to the parents, answering questions as they arise. After parents have been oriented, groups of students are then oriented. English classes might be used to conduct the student-group process. The counselor, working with the teacher, can guide the curriculum planning process, discuss vocational-related implications, and attend to general group concerns. Next, students are encouraged to discuss plans with parents and formulate their program. Counselors must then be available to work individually with students and/or parents who need special assistance in making their plan.

A major concept at the middle school level is that certain experiences are important in the career development process. For many years students have been asked to make decisions without being given an adequate exploratory base on which to reach that decision. Career guidance, implemented in a systematic approach, can assist the student in assuming responsibility for both his educational and vocational future.

GUIDANCE AND CAREER EDUCATION AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

It is generally agreed that the overall purpose of Career Education should be to prepare all students to live and function as pro-

ductive members of society upon completion of their chosen level of education. Guidance at the secondary level must be a vital ingredient and the counselor a significant person in this overall purpose of Career Education. Assisting students in planning for their educational, vocational and social needs is the counselor's role. Yet, a recent survey indicates that only slightly above five percent of the high school students considered the school guidance counselor as the most helpful or second most helpful person in making a career choice (Lisack, 1973). Secondary students need strong career guidance services. Four services that must be strengthened at this level are: a) vocational counseling, b) consultation, c) placement and d) follow-up.

Counselors must begin delivering concrete assistance through their vocational counseling services. Students will no longer accept general "advice-giving" but expect wide-range supportive services. More emphasis must be placed on a better understanding of the individual development process, greater use of group techniques, linkage of guidance services to other support personnel services, and an updated expansion of the vocational guidance informational resources for youth.

Many counselors have great reservations about encouraging high school students to make a tentative occupational choice, but go to

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Lisack, J. P., "Changing Trends in the Plans of High School Seniors, Comparisons in the Educational Employment and Occupational Plans of Seniors in Indiana High School Classes of 1966, 1969, and 1972" Manpower Report 73-1, Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University, 1973.

great lengths to encourage young people to follow a college preparatory curriculum. Rigid premature choices of an occupational goal and/or "tracking" of students in such a way as to prevent their total development, should not occur. Counselors can assist students at this frustrating point of decision-making, by offering them possible alternatives for establishing their future career goals and keeping their options open.

Consultation can be described as an act of advising or exchanging views. Potential functions of the counselor in this realm must focus not only on the student but include the school, family and community. Successful career guidance programs will expand the focus beyond the school building to that of the total community coordinating all efforts to benefit the student. Teachers can be assisted in developing skills to promote positive classroom behavior, in use of group process in promoting student growth and development and to understand the implication of subject matter to the student's career choice. Counselors may aid families by promoting an awareness of how home and school can work together in identifying experiences which will enhance a student's career plans. What a parent wants for his child, a school must also want for its students. Community involvement must be initiated by the counselor to develop a strong communications and feedback system regarding career exploration opportunities available to students. Regular contacts with businesses, industries and local service clubs which promote student development help to keep the counselor "atune" to current youth programs and opportunities.

Post-high school education placement services are well advanced in most guidance programs. However, services for placing students in employment either during or after leaving education is still largely undeveloped by most counselors. Provisions for both types of placement services must be an integral part of the career education program and the counselor's responsibility. It is recognized that counselors cannot implement the total placement program alone. Each member of the educational staff, parents, community and students must work in a team effort to carry out a successful placement program. Counselors will need to develop a specific placement plan to serve their specific student needs. The plan should begin as early in the student's educational life as is possible and be monitored in a continuous manner. The Sixth Report of the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education (1972), "Counseling and Guidance: A Call for Change," recommends placement services be considered a major function of guidance programs. Two excellent models can be found in Baltimore, Maryland, Public Schools and in Cobb County, Marietta, Georgia, to guide counselors in building their own placement program.

Hoyt (1972) points out that counselors must accept some responsibility for assisting students in carrying out decisions made in the counseling interview. He further states that the counselor's job does not terminate with the student's formulation of a plan. Career

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Sixth Report of the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, "Counseling and Guidance: A Call for Change," Lawrence Davenport, Chairman, Washington, D. C., 1972.

Hoyt, Kenneth, "The Counselor and Career Education," Guidance Newsletter, Chicago: Science Research Associates, Nov.-Dec., 1972.

guidance holds great potential for assisting students in making smoother transitions at key points during their career-life but also allows opportunity for the counselor to provide follow-up services to students both during school and after leaving school. The primary purpose of follow-up activities is to improve the educational program. One of these activities will include following-up the students while they are in school. In this way counselors can keep in close touch with all students whether or not they voluntarily seek help. Another activity will involve maintaining accurate records on former students, both dropouts and graduates. On the basis of this information, the school can conduct studies of the relationship between the training given these students and the use they later make of this training. Follow-up of graduating seniors is a third activity. Senior data sheets giving information regarding the student's next step, along with other information pertinent to the follow-up of this individual, are invaluable in conducting studies appraising the quality of the total educational experience as perceived by former students. Without accurate and systematic follow-up programs in education, it becomes very difficult to know when we get to where we are going or if we are getting there at all.

SUMMARY

At the beginning of this paper, it was indicated that many counselors are either avoiding, or displaying apathy towards, the Career Education movement. Hopefully this is because they are either un-

certain about their role or do not know where to begin in the program. Suggestions have been made for each level on how career guidance can become a useful tool for providing today's young people with the information, skills and assistance they need to make intelligent career plans for tomorrow's society.

Career Education has been described by many as a beautiful mosaic in which each cell has relevant on-going activity. The enthusiastic counselor can be the mortar that cements all these cells together forming a total Career Education program and at the same time giving visibility to school guidance services.

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